Neighborhood Networks

NEWS

Winter 1997

Tomorrow's Possibilities Begin Today

Welfare to Work

While the policies of welfare reform take hold, change is already evident in the communities across the nation that are looking ahead to tomorrow's possibilities by investing in the Neighborhood Networks initiative today.

Since Friendship Village celebrated its grand opening in July 1996, residents describe the new Neighborhood Networks Center as an important addition to their community. According to Resident Council vice-president, Jackie Dunbar, the center has had a profound effect on the HUD-assisted housing development in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

"I'm excited about it," said Dunbar, "Each day, I watch grown women run to get to the door on time." Ms. Dunbar has been involved with the center since the embryonic stages of its development.

Gloria Colmenar, Manager of Friendship Village Apartments, enjoys participating in programs at the NN Center with resident Delpheoe Scutching. Photo by Friendship Village.

After attending a Neighborhood Networks Regional Conference in Boston, she felt compelled to assist in developing a center for her community.

Ms. Dunbar contacted the property manager, and HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator, Henry Colonna. Irvine Beard, a local elementary teacher, worked out a business plan with an inexpensive start up cost. Mr. Beard had previously set up a learning center at his school with $30 and several donated computers. "I didn't think we needed state-of-the-art computer technology, just computer technology," he said. School officials approved the donation of several computers for the Center's use and a two-bedroom apartment was converted into a computer learning center. Together Beard and Dunbar created computer certificate programs and tutorials for the apartment's residents.

"When I feel like giving up, the children alone encourage me to con-

YOUR ONLINE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Jacqueline Dunbar, resident, and Irvine Beard, a teacher at Birdneck Elementary School, assist students working on programs at the center.

tinue. They make you want to work," said Dunbar. Recently, several hours were added after many requests for more computer time. Dunbar and Beard would like to create a separate computer room devoted entirely to the children but currently they share the 13 computers, three of which are Internet accessible, with teen and adult residents who come to learn basic typing skills, word processing programs, and Internet surfing capabilities.

After seeing the progress of Friendship Village, a Christmas fund was developed at a local bank so that the complex's children could receive gifts. Through promotion of the initiative by Colonna, partnerships were also developed with the local PBS station (WHRO), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Federal Bureau of Investigation - Virginia Office (FBI), and Old Dominion University (ODU) .

"I thought the Neighborhood Networks initiative would be an outstanding opportunity to give Internet access to individuals who may not otherwise receive it," said Brian Callahan, Director of Interactive Technology at WHRO. The television station anticipates a long-term partnership with the Center while providing Internet services and access

to technology and education training sessions. Callahan also provided the use of the facility to Friendship Village residents for teleconferences.

NASA has an Affordable Technology to Link America's Schools (AT-LAS) program that coincides with the development of the Neighborhood Networks initiative and is working side-by-side with Friendship Village. The goal of the ATLAS program is to link more than 70,000 K-12 school sites nationally, by the year 2000, in support of the President's goal to connect all of America's schools to the Internet.

"The entire concept is to demonstrate how government organizations working together can help provide opportunities for students to gain knowledge from information on the web to further their exploration of our universe and understand what makes this country great. ATLAS is a cost-effective way of implementing access to information, and NASA is proud to share that with the nation," says Dr. Joseph Heyman, Director for Technology Applications at NASA Langley Research Center.

Another government agency working with Friendship Village resi-

dents is the FBI. After working with several community drug outreach programs, Special Agent Butch Holtz said he enjoys doing more than providing buttons and stickers by working with the NN Center.

Old Dominion University is offering tutorial assistance to the center, through a current program established with ODU's School of Education, which allows undergraduate student interns to tutor the residents in computer programs for college credit. Eventually the university's School of Business will assist the Center in developing a microenterprise. Another partner, Nation's Bank, donated office furniture to give the center a more professional atmosphere.

With the growing need for computer technology, the residents at Friendship Village have positioned themselves to receive favor in the surrounding area with local employers while relaying a message that they are willing to meet the challenge of this growing technological demand. ❏

Sylvia Purvis

The Friendship Village Neighborhood Networks Center is not the only center successful in meeting the technological demand. Neighborhood Networks Centers around the country are doing equally as well.

As a result of training received at the Neighborhood Networks Center at Madison Wisconsin's **Northport Apartments**, nine residents are working in the management office of **American Baptist Homes**, managing the housing complex and the center. Seven residents have earned positions in the community doing office work, data entry, and working as teacher's assistants, and five were hired to run the Head Start program and day care center located on the apartment's property. Since the center's opening, the apartment complex enjoys the lowest absentee rate among school-age children in Madison.

In Richmond, California, four residents at **Crescent Park Apartments** have obtained entry-level office positions, and another resident has obtained a job as a paralegal. Each individual received training from computer classes offered at the complex's Neighborhood Networks Center.

The recent opening of the 100th NN Center was a tremendous milestone. With continued openings and increasing employment results, Neighborhood Networks is well on its way to becoming a household name, and an instrumental force in closing the digital divide ❑

Welfare Reform and NN Centers
States Setting Standards

Technology is the future of many jobs, and Americans are beginning to understand the importance it has in our lives as we head into the 21st Century. Yet there is a great need to make sure that everyone has access to the unlimited possibilities. The idea behind Neighborhood Networks is that a community can combine its resources, build computer learning centers, and introduce a wide variety of employment skills and opportunities to residents, including those they might otherwise never experience.

This type of initiative is at the heart of President Clinton's welfare reform, which emphasizes ways to make residents of HUD-insured and -assisted housing more employable and self-sufficient.

According to Kevin E. Marchman, Acting Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, and Michael A. Stegman, Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, state legislatures must prepare to ratify welfare reform packages that show how local jurisdictions will achieve this outcome.

As of January 1997, there are 100 Neighborhood Network Centers on-line and more than 600 in the planning stages. Each community defines its needs and incorporates them into the overall operating plan of the center; the primary goal, however, is job skills and ultimately employment.

Although each state develops its own welfare reform program, Congress has provided a basic framework with key implications for how services are to be provided in the future. Marchman and Stegman suggest the following:

• Learn about the welfare reform initiative in your state; find out if it helps or hinders residents.

• Ensure that local rental policies support welfare-to-work initiatives.
• Realize the opportunities available through community partnerships.
• Familiarize residents with reform and help them become more involved.
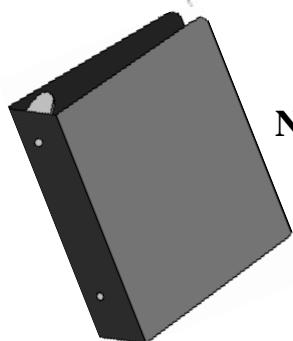• Share your successful initiatives such as Neighborhood Networks.

The idea behind welfare reform is to break the cycle of government dependency. Even before President Clinton signed welfare reform into law, HUD's emphasis was shifting to people and neighborhoods and not just housing. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), welfare reform will require creative strategies because...

...residents will be limited to a lifetime benefit limit of five years and will be required to work after two years of receiving a benefit;
...legal immigrants will lose their eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Food Stamps;
...the entire emphasis of welfare assistance shifts from maintaining a basic income floor for needy families to assisting those families in finding work and becoming self-sufficient. ❑

Neighborhood Networks
Information Center Launched

To better meet the needs of our Neighborhood Networks partners, the Neighborhood Networks Clearinghouse is expanding its services and changing its name. The new name, the Neighborhood Networks Information Center (NNIC), reflects the additional role the center will play in providing you with technical assistance and referrals. Information specialists Kimberley Norwood and Sylvia Purvis are standing by to answer your questions or put you in touch with someone who can. The Information Center operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., eastern time.
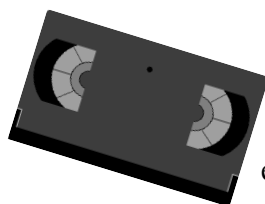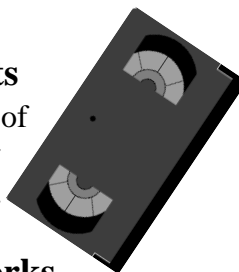
Now Available!

Neighborhood Networks Resource Guide

Each of the seven chapters in this manual guides you step-by-step through the stages involved in developing and operating a center.

Neighborhood Networks Highlights

This 12-minute video features footage of Neighborhood Networks activity in Boston, New Orleans, and Seattle. Perfect for a presentation.

Neighborhood Networks Long-Distance Learning

This comprehensive two-hour video provides extensive footage of Neighborhood Networks activity in Boston, New Orleans, and Seattle.

Neighborhood Networks Media Montage

This six-minute video features broadcast coverage of Neighborhood Networks activity throughout the United States.

How to reach us...

To order any of the products listed above, or to receive additional copies of the newsletter, please call our toll-free number at...

1-888-312-2743

The Forty-City Tour

The Neighborhood Networks staff remains committed to serving HUD Field Offices by providing outreach and public/private partnership training. Below are the areas the Community Development Team plans to visit. *Note: Because of space limitations, only HUD employees may attend.*

Location	Date
Buffalo	January 13
Atlanta	January 16
Pittsburgh	January 15
Aspen/Office	January 20
Baltimore	January 23
Cincinnati	January 28
Indianapolis	January 28
Chicago	January 30
Columbus	January 30
Newark	February 4
Boston	February 4
New York	February 6
Los Angeles	February 11
Honolulu	February 13
Puerto Rico	February 20
New Orleans	February 27
Dallas/Ft. Worth	February 27
Omaha	March 11
Portland	March 11
St. Louis	March 11
Seattle	March 13
Des Moines	March 13
Kansas City	March 13
Houston	March 18
Detroit	March 18
Grand Rapids	March 20
Jacksonville	March 20
San Diego	March 25
San Francisco	March 27
Phoenix	April 1
San Antonio	April 3
Denver/Salt Lake	April 3
Louisville	April 8
Philadelphia	April 8
Minneapolis	April 10
Knoxville	May 1
Nashville	May 2
Greensboro	May 6
Columbia	May 8

Carmen Porco

Self-Sufficiency: Strong Community the Goal

Carmen Porco (left), an NN Consultant working on behalf of the Northport and Packer management, discusses establishing and sustaining centers with Jerald Nachison of HUD at the Kansas City Conference in September.

It has been more than a year since the initiatives of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have been in place. What we wish to share is our experience in establishing four Neighborhood Networks in two different cities and two different kinds of housing. We hope to share these experiences from the perspective of owners, management, residents, and other public partners.

Northport Apartments and **Packer Townhouses** are two housing communities located in Madison, Wisconsin. Northport is an old 221D3 multi-family housing development. It is 100 percent Section 8. It has 140-garden style units. The average income level is $9,670. Northport built a large community learning center which opened in September of 1994.

Plymouth Apartments and **Cambridge Apartments**, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin are elderly housing communities. Cambridge is a 104-unit high-rise development located on the east side, and the average age of the residents is 80. Plymouth is a 112-unit garden style apartment development for the elderly located in the urban area of downtown. The average age of residents is 78.

We believe that "concept can change context" which is to say, that the way we approach a situation largely determines the outcome of that situation. At a philosophical level our goals have been, (1) increasing self-sufficiency, (2) building a strong sense of community and security and (3) restoring the balance of equality through respect rather than charity.

In practice we have focused on technological opportunity, education and employment as strategies to achieve these goals. We have been able to go beyond simply serving our residents to actually becoming a service base for our residents and the larger community.

To promote the program base of our Neighborhood Networks, we have developed a three-pronged approach:

- a K-12 educational program;
- an adult education program;.
- and a micro-business and employment development program.

All jobs related to the housing enterprise are held by residents. By redefining housing enterprise as a human services organization, we established a place-based institution that incorporated the residents as employees. Housing Management was defined in three parts: Administrative, Environment/Maintenance and Social Services and functions as a human services and resource development organization.
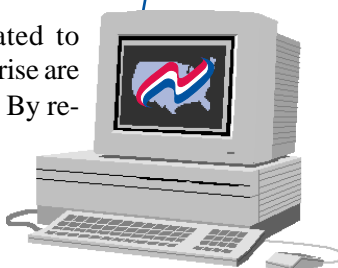
Neighborhood Networks is an important initiative for all involved in managing housing and community. It is the first time we have been able to own a resource base in the low income communities all over the country. With the emphasis on networking communities together, we have a chance of discovering our strengths and common ground. ❒

Northport Apartments
- 14 high-end workstations (DOS and MAC)
- Printers
- Internet Access

Packer Townhomes
- 14 high-end workstations (DOS and MAC)
- Printers
- Digital camera
- HP Jet Scanner 4c
- Video camera
- Internet Access

Bay Ridge Residents Celebrate at Grand Opening

Members of the Annapolis business, civic, education, and social services community joined the residents of Bay Ridge Apartments to celebrate the opening of the Bay Ridge Neighborhood Networks Center on November 8, 1996.

Tanya Cooper-Johnson, standing president of the Bay Ridge Community Development Corporation, officiated the ter, located in Bay Ridge's 198-unit privately owned, publicly subsidized apartment complex, has five Pentium 120 computers with Internet access. Creative Resources at Work Inc. and Anne Arundel Community College—partners in this initiative— provide Bay Ridge residents with GED, youth, job training, and job placement programs. Other partners include Anne Arundel County, the

Residents and members of the Annapolis community gather to celebrate the opening of the Bay Ridge NN Center in October.

Rochelle Lyons lets her son, Reakwon, work with her so they can both reap the benefits of spending time at the NN Center.

hour-long ceremony, which featured congratulations by city Alderman Carl Snowden and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Housing Chris Greer. Channel 11 WBAL-TV and *The Capital* provided local media coverage of the event.

The Neighborhood Networks Cen-

City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County Community Development Corporation, Crestar Bank, Landex Corporation, and Wilder-Richman Management.

The ceremony was followed by a reception and tour of the center. ❒

News stories about the Neighborhood Networks initiative and events at several NN centers are published frequently as more communities become involved. The stories appear in national and local newspapers, newsletters, and in television broadcasts.

The opening of the **Bay Ridge Apartments** NN Center in Annapolis, Maryland, was featured in *The Capitol* newspaper in October. The newspaper at the University of California at Berkeley published a story about a graduation ceremony at the NN center **at North Ridge Cooperative Homes Residence** in October in San Francisco, California. *KCTV* television station in Kansas City, Missouri, aired a story about the opening of the **Parker Square** NN Center.

The NN center in **Forest Towers East** in New Orleans, Louisiana, was featured in the *Times-Picayune* in November. The Fall-Winter issue of the Community Technology Center's *CTCnet* carried a story about the NN initiative.

In December, *Tulsa World* and *KTVL* television published stories about the grand opening of the **Brightwaters Apartments** NN Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

If you would like to have Aspen's Public Information Team assist you in promoting a Neighborhood Networks event, please call:

Josie Plachta
Public Information Manager
301-738-6784
jplachta@aspensys.com

Award-Winning Website
provides
INFORMATION & RESOURCES

NNDatabase

W e're proud that the National Low Income Housing Coalition chose the NN Website as *Website of the Week* January 24, 1997. And, we continue to improve. Detailed. Comprehensive. Powerful. These are the words that websurfers are using to describe the new Neighborhood Networks Databases. Visitors to the NN website (http://www.hud.gov/nnw/nnwindex.html) can now tap into a wealth of program information about participating HUD-insured and -assisted properties, centers, partner organizations, resources, news articles, and more.

The web site features five searchable databases with a current combined total of over 1,000 records and hundreds of contact names and numbers. The search results are arranged in a list, which can be viewed and printed. *(See "Instructions" below)*

- The **Program Database** is the gateway to detailed property and center information. Data includes computer hardware and software, services being provided, partners, funding sources, and complete contact information.

- The **Partner Database** provides detailed information about those organizations that are working voluntarily with one or more NN participant properties. Data includes partner name, contact information, type of organization, and description of services performed.

- The **Resources Database** identifies a broad range of resources that could be used to support the set up or operation of NN Centers. These include financial resources (e.g., grants, scholarships), computer equipment, software, technical support, volunteers, and general information.

- The **Conference Database** provides specific information about upcoming conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc. that address Neighborhood Networks-related issues and topics. Data includes: event titles, descriptions, dates, locations, registration, and price information.

- Finally, the **In The News Database** contains news features about Neighborhood Networks from a variety of different media sources. Data includes media source, title, author, date, and written text of the news features.

Residents, HUD staff, property owners, management agents, and partner organizations, all play a vital role in helping to keep the information contained in these databases up to date. To submit updates please contact:

David Elmer
NN Webmaster
301-251-5268
301-738-6655 *fax*
delmer@aspensys.com

Instructions

1 Access the NN web site at
http://www.hud.gov/nnw/nnwindex.html
2 Click on the "Locations & Information" button
3 Click on "Neighborhood Networks Databases"
4 Choose 1 of 5 databases (Program, Partner, Resources, News, Conference) to search.
5 Conduct your search either by all text (OPTION 1) or by a specific field (OPTION 2). (OPTION 1) To search text, just type in a word or words in the adjoining box and then press "SUBMIT". The database will "find" all records that meet your criteria and list them once the search is complete. (OPTION 2) To search by field, select one from the pull-down menu. Next, type in a keyword or words in the adjoining box and then press "SUBMIT". The database will "find" all records that meet your criteria and list them once the search is complete.

LINE!NowONLINE!NowONLINE!

***F*ind out which conferences are taking place in your area and how to sign up. There are more than 10 scheduled during the next few months and all provide an opportunity for learning and networking.**

***F*ollow the grand openings of NN centers around the country. Remain up to date by visiting the NN Website at:**

http://www.hud.gov/nnw/nnwindex.html

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